



A message from the director: Kathy Schmitt

It's been a little more than a year since I took on the job of directing the Wisconsin Farm Center and the time has flown by. We've added some new faces in that time. Marty Grosse has joined the team to provide financial counseling and farm succession planning. Ty Rohloff is the new team leader for the Rural Electric Power Services (REPS) program, and Jack Chang has joined the staff to take on the development of services to minority farmers, with a special emphasis on working with Hmong producers.



We still have some seasoned staff, including Drs. John Roberts and John Marks, DVMs, who has returned to the team to meet the increased demand for dairy herd diagnostic services. Frank Friar continues to work on farm succession planning and financial counseling, and John Dupuis leads mediation services and works with REPS. Roger Kasper continues to work on research and special projects, and Mel Zech works with the Dairy 30x20 program and provides back up for the help line.

In addition to our talented staff, we continue to have the strong support and assistance of 40 trained

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Enjoy this first edition of the Wisconsin Farm Center Quarterly Newsletter. Topics in today's issue include:

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MEET AG DEVELOPMENT'S NEW DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR

The new Division Administrator of Agricultural Development at DATCP is a familiar face. Dan Smith previously worked in the Wisconsin Farm Center as an

volunteers. About half provide one on one assistance to farm families and half conduct mediations for the Farm Center.

The Wisconsin Farm Center is now fully staffed and our services are rock solid with a blend of experience, energy and a universal passion for serving the people who put food on our tables and provide jobs for so many in Wisconsin. We're ready to serve in times of transition and in times of distress. Don't hesitate to call on us.

Farm Center can assist with end of the year planning

Even though Wisconsin farm fields may look dormant this time of year, do not let the lack of green growing fool you. This can be the busiest time for farmers and the difference in making the year a profitable one. The Wisconsin Farm Center is available to help farmers bring the 2013 books to a close.



"Now is the time to concentrate and make a road map of where you have been and where you are going on your farm," said Frank Friar of the Wisconsin Farm Center. "Regardless of your size, it is important to recognize what is working and what improvements need to be made now to prevent a challenging situation in the spring."

The first step to completing 2013 is to collect the income and expenses from the first ten months that are completed and to project the remaining two months. This will give a big, overall picture of the year... [Read more »](#)

Beginning Farmer and

economic advisor. Most recently, Smith was the Chief Executive Officer of Midwestern BioAg. [Read more>>](#)



2013 CROP PRODUCTION

The November Crop Production Report is available from the National Agricultural Statistics Services. [Read more >>](#)

CONTACT THE WISCONSIN FARM CENTER

Wisconsin Farm Center staff are available weekdays from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contact the Wisconsin Farm Center at DATCP toll-free at 1-800-942-2474 or farmcenter@wisconsin.gov.

Farm Asset Owner Tax Credit deadline approaches

This tax credit first available in 2011 provides an eligible beginning farmer a refundable tax credit of up to \$500 for farm business management program coursework cost reimbursement and a refundable tax credit of 15% of the lease amount for depreciable assets to the eligible established farmer. To qualify as a "Beginning Farmer", at the time of application the individual must have a net worth of less than \$200,000, (2) must have farmed for fewer than ten out of the preceding 15 years, (3) must have entered into a lease for a term of at least three years with an established farmer for the use of the established farmer's agricultural assets, and (4) uses the leased agricultural assets in farming. The "Established Farmer" means a person who, at the time that the person submits an application to DATCP, (1) has engaged in farming for a total of at least ten years, (2) owns agricultural assets, (machinery, equipment, facilities, or livestock that is used in farming), and (3) has entered into a lease for a term of at least three years with a beginning farmer for the use of the agricultural assets by the beginning farmer.

To apply the Beginning Farmer must supply their Business Plan, a copy of the lease Agreement, a copy of most recent IRS Schedule F, a description of their experience & training in farming and a program description of the Farm Management Program they attended (the School's program description will suffice), if claiming the tax credit. The Established Farmer must supply a copy of their lease agreement and a completed leased asset description. If the criteria are met, the applicants receive a certificate from DATCP that they file with their taxes to claim the credit.

This credit was designed to allow the beginning farmer a one-time tax credit and an established farmer a tax credit for three years of the lease. As part of the 2015 Wisconsin State Budget signed on June 30, 2013, by Governor Walker a new sunset is established for

the Beginning Farmer and Farm Asset Owner Tax Credit program. The tax credit is now set to be eliminated for lease years after January 1, 2014. Businesses with eligible expenses during the 2013 tax year should apply before the February 15, 2014, application deadline to be included in the final round of this tax credit program.

Those interested in applying for the tax credit or seeking more information should contact the Wisconsin Farm Center hotline soon by calling 800-942-2474 to obtain application materials to be sure to meet the February 15, 2014 application deadline.

(Submitted by John Dupuis)

Deep six of section 179 depreciation

Accelerated depreciation has been a boon to farmers with record income from once-in-a-lifetime crop prices. It has been a good time to update machinery and building needs in the last six years and get major tax savings, but those major first year and seven year accelerated deductions will come to an abrupt end on December 31, 2013 as these tax laws expire.

The quick message? Farmers who have large incomes in 2013 and legitimate equipment or building needs should consider buying before year end. Talk to your tax advisor and with some tax planning, your purchase can enhance your farm business while helping your tax bill.

The word on the street? Some form of accelerated depreciation may return from new legislation, but it won't be close to the numbers small and large farmers could save on purchases since the 2008 tax year.

(Submitted by Mel Zech)

Affordable Care Act resources available

The Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) is in the news daily. The Affordable Care Act has the potential benefit to farmers of providing a better insurance plan at less cost than current out-of-pocket private insurance plans. The Kaiser Family Foundation has a premium and subsidy calculator <http://kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator/> that can give you an idea of what your costs could be under the program.

If you are having trouble applying for coverage or have questions about the program, you can get local, personal help. Click on <https://localhelp.healthcare.gov/> and enter your zip code to find local, personal help applying for health coverage. To see a map of the Regional Enrollment Network for Wisconsin, go to <http://e4healthwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Regional-Enrollment-Network-map.pdf>. Contact phone numbers are provided for the regional hubs.

You can also apply over the phone at 1-800-318-2596.
(Submitted by Kathy Schmitt)

Farm Mediation and Arbitration Program benefits Wisconsin farmers

Disputes can have negative impacts on the parties as well as the community. Most disputes arise because of communication problems. Mediation can help the parties resolve these issues by creating an environment that encourages communication. Mediation provides an available alternative to the court system in searching for solutions. Litigation can be expensive and time consuming, and generally produces win-lose solutions.

The Farm Mediation and Arbitration Program provides a no cost, accessible forum for farm related disputes. The program makes the services of trained

volunteer mediators available to help the parties negotiate a workable solution for their dispute. Mediation produces a win-win solution where all parties may walk away from the dispute satisfied.

Many different types of disputes can be mediated. Adverse determinations by the USDA, including loan acceleration, wetlands violations, conservation reserve program violations, rural lender disputes and family disagreements between Wisconsin farm families are all examples of issues that can be mediated.

Mediation is a voluntary process in which a trained person or persons, referred to as a mediator, assists individuals by providing a "safe" environment to discuss problems and potential options available to resolve those problems. The mediator has no authority to make decisions for the parties in mediation, but is responsible for guiding and facilitating the process. Mediation is often used prior to formal litigation. A mediator is not an advocate for one party or the other. A mediator is not an advocate for one possible solution over another, but rather remains neutral and impartial during the process.

The final stage in the mediation process if agreement is reached is preparing a written document to confirm the details of the agreement. All parties are asked to review and sign the written agreement. Once this has been done, the agreement becomes a binding contract between the parties.

If you have, an issue to be mediated please contact the Wisconsin Farm Center Mediation Program by calling 800-942-2474 to learn more or request an application.
(Submitted by John Dupuis)

Herd-based diagnostic assistance available

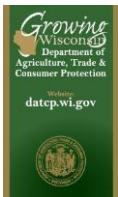
With winter coming, the Wisconsin Farm Center reminds farmers about the veterinary diagnostic support available to resolve complex herd-health and production concerns. The Herd-Based Diagnostic

Program serves Wisconsin dairy herds of all sizes and management types. It addresses production, cell count, cow loss, and other concerns. There is no charge for the assistance provided by the Herd-based Diagnostic Program.

To utilize the program, farmers must complete an application that provides a description of the concerns to be addressed, contact information for local farm-service professionals, and a basic orientation to the farm. To request veterinary assistance from the Herd-Based Diagnostic Program or learn more about the process, contact the Wisconsin Farm Center at 1-800-942-2474 or farmcenter@wisconsin.gov.
(Submitted by Ty Robloff)

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

datcp.wisconsin.gov



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